



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

September 20, 2021 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

PRESENT

Mayor Sam Norton

Councilmember Roman Gaddis

Councilmember Ron Larson

Councilmember Johnny Ariemma

Councilmember Joel Cordle

OPEN MEETING

Mayor Norton opened the meeting at 5:32 pm

BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

1. Cemetery Committee—August 2021, Chris Worick, Committee Chairman

Presented by Mark Buchanan

- Memorial Park Columbarium dedication completed
- UNG students will be supporting the monument marker for the unmarked graves
- City Cemeteries will be closing at 6 pm

2. Main Street – August 2021, Ariel Alexander, Main Street/DDA Staff

- Downtown Business Survey report, only 18 responses
- Developing Downtown Dahlonega business package and resources for new businesses

Mayor Norton commended that the Main Street/Downtown Development Program has 24 action items on its calendar in 2 months. Our Main St/DDA does such a good job.

Mayor Norton called to introduce the new City Marshal, George Albert.

3. Introduction of City Marshal- Sam Norton, Mayor

Mr. Albert addressed the Council and is excited to bring excellent customer service to the community he loves; he appreciates the challenge. The official start date is October 24, 2021. Welcome and congrats from the City Council. A press release to the Nugget has been requested to announce the appointment.

TOURISM: Sam McDuffie, Tourism Director

1. Tourism Report August 2021

- www.dahlonega.org website has had 1.3 M page views in less than a year. There have been 105,000 visitors a year to date.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. Community Development – August 2021, Jameson Kinley, Planning and Zoning Administrator
 - Vickery Development project on hold, in developer's hands.
 - Administrator Kinley's mission is to keep the CityCity easy to work with for applicants and staff.
2. Finance and Administration Department – August 2021, Allison Martin, Finance Director
 - 50 new customers for e-bill allowing for ACH payments
 - Draft Personnel policy for review to City Manager
3. Public Works—August 2021, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer
 - Staffing concerns with the pandemic. Gravedigging and trash are a priority. GDOT has reached out to discuss the Yahoola bridge on GA 60 about replacing that, which will require full closure on GA 60 for up to a year. Responses due to October 13.
 - Mayor Norton addressed a standing water issue on GA Hwy 60 coming into Dahlonega.
 - The UNG sidewalk design is completed; This project should be done by Spring.
 - The installation of meters on Meaders is this October.
4. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report August 2021, John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director
 - Cross Connection has arrived. We are working jointly with other departments.
 - The pipe at the Chevron and BBQ was a troublesome leak and is repaired.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. 2021 Off Systems Safety, Vince Hunsinger, Capital Projects Manager presented by Mark Buchanan
 - Off System Striping low bid was \$52k; we must spend \$67 ft to take advantage of the GDOT grant. I would like to see the total amount budgeted.

City Clerk Mary Csukas questioned if this item should be added to the Special Called Meeting tonight for a vote. Director Buchanan motioned the project at the Special Called meeting up to the entire budgeted amount.

The Council was encouraged by the additional safety this striping would bring to the sidewalks.

2. 2022 Employee Benefits Program, Allison Martin, Finance Director
Matt Bidwell, MSI Benefits Group, Inc.
 - Initial renewal of Employee Benefits was at a 9% renewal. No other organizations were willing to bid to ensure the workforce. GMA made changes to the coverage; raised deductibles and emergency room out of pocket. We request a slight increase in out-of-pocket and freeze employee contribution. Request employee contribution to freeze the contribution this year and incremental increase to offset the rise. GMA needs the information back ASAP as Open Enrollment is in October.
 - Mayor Norton discussed the benefits of being a GIRMA member and reminded Council that GMA would absorb a lot of this cost. Councilmember Ariemma concurred.

- Councilmember Larson reminded the Council of previously desired direction of the employee benefits program to go to less percentage paid by the City and asked for support from other Councilmembers to move this way.
- In response to Councilmember Larson, Mayor Norton, Councilmember Gaddis, and Councilmember Cordle indicated they agreed with the staff recommendation.

3. DDA Input - 147 N Park Street, Bill Schmid, City Manager

Ariel Alexander presented in City Manager Schmid's absence.

- The Main Street/ DDA Board response for the 147 Park Street project provided a generic list of reasonable projects they would be willing to support.
- Council agreed their response provided a good list of criteria preproposals.
- Council discussed the need for parking and residential housing as being a priority.
- Council discussed two representatives from the UNG College as possible applicants for a vacancy on the DDA/Main Street Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Norton called to adjourn and reconvene the Special Called Meeting at 6:22 pm.

Motion made by Council Member Gaddis, Seconded by Council Member Cordle.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gaddis, Council Member Larson, Council Member Ariemma, Council Member Cordle